

Education Committee
March 1, 2019

Testimony in Opposition to:

**GOVERNOR'S BILL 7150 – AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION – SECTION 1**

My name is Robert Shea. I am an attorney/lobbyist for the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference. My son attended a wonderful CREC public school for kids with severe autism; and my daughter attended great a Catholic grade school and a great Catholic high school.

I am very fortunate that my children had these different educational opportunities; and I strongly believe that it is the many different educational opportunities that cause Connecticut to be such a great place to live and raise a family.

For several decades, our Governors and the Legislature have embraced and supported our nonpublic school children -- including kids at **Catholic schools**, **Jewish schools** and other **private schools** -- through two great programs: (1) the school bus program, and (2) the school nurse program.

The School Bus program

One great program enacted many years ago by the Governor and Legislature had the state paying for nonpublic school kids to access school buses for rides to their nonpublic schools in their towns (Section 10-281).

Unfortunately, a few years ago, the then Governor and the Legislature ended the state's financial commitment for this program, and shifted the responsibility to the towns. Worse even, now some towns don't want to help the nonpublic school kids in their towns with the bus transportation, as bills have been filed this session to allow towns to terminate the bus assistance on the town level.

The School Nurse Program

Another great program enacted more than 50 years ago was the School Nurse program under Section 10-217a. The first section of the statute clearly states the State of Connecticut wants to provide equal healthcare services to **all school children**, public and nonpublic alike:

“Each town or regional school district which provides health services for children attending its public schools in any grade, from kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, shall provide the same health services for children in such grades attending private nonprofit schools therein, when a majority of the children attending such schools are residents of the state of Connecticut” (emphasis added).

Unfortunately, Section 1 of Governor's Bill 7150, at lines 26-29, proposes to end the state's financial commitment to healthcare services for all school children at all different schools – by requiring our schools (families) to reimburse the towns for nursing services.

This proposal, on top of the state's recent withdrawal of commitment to the bus program, sends another unhappy message to many families – who are all good citizens and good taxpayers – that the state, and some towns, don't want to help anymore if our kids are at nonpublic schools.

I am respectfully hoping that Governor Lamont will reconsider this proposal; and I am hoping that the Legislature will not support this proposal.

Sincerely,
Robert Shea
West Hartford, CT